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Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and task teams since the Tenth Conference

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

Summary**

1. The report highlights the activities of the Working Group on Exonyms of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 2012. During the period, the Working Group held three business meetings and four workshops and published four books of proceedings.

2. The Working Group met on 6 August 2012 during the Tenth Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and discussed the endonym/exonym divide and new definitions of "endonym" and "exonym", as well as the question of whether a third term was needed for international waters. At the same meeting, Peter Jordan was confirmed as the Convenor of the Working Group in an election.

3. The Working Group held its fourteenth meeting in Corfu, Greece, from 23 to 25 May 2013. The meeting was in the form of a workshop and was organized in conjunction with a meeting of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (convened by Staffan Nystrom). The meeting was attended by 33 experts from 20 countries and had before it 17 presentations on the endonym/exonym divide and on the use and documentation of exonyms in various countries. The presentations were followed by an intensive discussion on new definitions of "endonym" and "exonym". Proceedings of the fourteenth meeting have been published as volume 3 of the toponymic book series *Name & Place* edited by Peter Jordan and Paul Woodman.

4. The Working Group met on 29 April 2014 during the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and decided that as the Working Group's workshop had already held very intensive and deep discussions on the topic in several meetings,

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** The full report was prepared by Peter Jordan (Austria), Convenor, Working Group on Exonyms, and is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/23/CRP.23.

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its next meeting, which would take place in Hermagor, Austria, would be the last opportunity to finally arrive at new definitions of "endonym" and "exonym".

5. The Working Group held its sixteenth meeting in Hermagor, Austria, from 5 to 7 June 2014 in the format of a workshop. It was attended by 28 experts from 17 countries and had before it 18 paper presentations on several aspects of the endonym/exonym divide. The presentations were followed by an intensive discussion on proposals for new definitions of "endonym" and "exonym". Following the discussion, it was decided that the current definitions of "endonym" and "exonym", as provided in the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*, were in the given situation the optimum achievable. The proceedings of the sixteenth meeting of the Working Group have been published as volume 4 of the book series *Name & Place*.

6. The Working Group held its seventeenth meeting in Zagreb from 14 to 16 May 2015 in the form of a workshop. It was attended by 33 experts from 15 countries and 16 papers were presented dealing with criteria for the use of exonyms (which was the thematic focus of the meeting); terminology in the field of endonyms and exonyms; and the actual use of exonyms in various countries. It was concluded that instead of developing criteria for the use of exonyms, the Working Group should rather focus on noting the current trends in exonym use and should avoid using a normative approach. Proceedings of the meeting appeared in 2016 in volume 6 of the book series *Name & Place*.

7. The eighteenth meeting of the Working Group, on 26 April 2016, was a short business meeting during the twenty-ninth session of the Group of Experts, held at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok.

8. The nineteenth meeting of the Working Group was held in Prague in conjunction with a meeting of the Working Group on Romanization Systems (chaired by Peeter Pall). It was attended by 26 participants from 16 countries and 19 scientific papers were presented. A general debate on the use of exonyms on the last day resulted in an agreement on a small set of globally common characteristics and criteria. Proceedings of the meeting will appear as volume 7 of the book series *Name & Place*.